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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 000435

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/20/2019  
TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [TSPA](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: RUSSIA'S MFA ON THE U.S. AND RUSSIAN COMM  
SATELLITE COLLISION

REF: A. STATE 12945  
[1](#)B. MOSCOW 356

Classified By: DCM Eric Rubin: Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (S) Summary: On Friday, February 13, EST delivered ref A talking points on the satellite collision to the MFA, following up U/S Burns's and Ambassador's discussion of the issue with DFM Ryabkov (ref B). Expert on Military Space and ABM Systems Klapovskiy indicated that Russia is satisfied with actions to date on the incident, but said that much is yet to be done to assess the consequences. He stated that transparency and confidence building activities, especially those included in Russia's draft resolution to the UN General Assembly, were important to cooperative efforts, as long as they covered both military and civilian space activities. He said that safety and security in space was a serious question that should be dealt with via Russia's three priorities: prevent weapons from being deployed, transparency in all space activities, both military and civilian, and a working Code of Conduct. End Summary

[1](#)2. (S) On Friday, February 13, EST officer delivered the reftel talking points to MFA Department for Security Affairs and Disarmament Expert on Military Space and ABM Systems Alexander A. Klapovskiy and Second Secretary Andrey Grebenshchikov. (Note: This was a follow on to U/S Burns's and Ambassador Beyrle's February 12 conversation with DFM Ryabkov in which he outlined the same points.) Klapovskiy stated that the Russian government was "satisfied" with the information it had received on the collision, but that there was still much to be studied regarding what had happened and the consequences of the impact.

Russian-sponsored UN Resolution on Transparency and  
Confidence Building  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) Klapovskiy said that he agreed wholeheartedly with the view that this incident provided an opportunity to increase and improve bilateral transparency and confidence building measures. He elaborated that Russia had on four occasions put forward a resolution to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) regarding transparency on space activities. He said this resolution covered not only civilian, but also military space programs. Klapovskiy allowed that Russia had attempted to draft the resolution with the cooperation of the U.S., but "unfortunately, that did not succeed." He commented that this effort was supported by "most" of the UN members and that the USG knew "who was against and who was for" it. He concluded that this incident might help to breathe new life into the resolution, perhaps giving a push for a "new look" at it.

[1](#)4. (SBU) He identified transparency as a "multi-faceted" problem, as the issues involved not only what was in space,

but the launches, orbits and return to Earth of satellites and other spacecraft components. He mentioned the return to Earth of the old MIR spacecraft as a prime example of how things could go right. He said this cooperative effort should be studied as a model for future cooperation on space safety and security. Klapovskiy stated that cooperation based on transparency and confidence building measures can only work if it covers both military and civilian activities.

15. (SBU) Klapovskiy highlighted information sharing as a way to increase transparency, noting it was Russia's second priority to provide for safety and security in space. Russia's draft UNGA resolution on transparency on space activities included a paragraph inviting states to provide information on all space-related activities. Many countries have already begun to do so, including China, the United Kingdom, and the EU. He proposed that preliminary information on all launches be published on a website.

16. (SBU) Klapovskiy said that the U.S. had "welcomed" the EU-proposed Code of Conduct with provisions for covering launches, maneuvers, and return to Earth of space equipment. Given the seriousness of safety and security in space, Klapovskiy hoped the new U.S. Administration will pay more attention to space and the Code of Conduct, commenting that perhaps this incident would focus the US and RF on the key, important space activity issues. Klapovskiy declared that the danger to manned space objects, such as the International Space Station (ISS) could not be downplayed. The ISS, he said, had been maneuvered out of the path of space debris eight times in the "last few years."

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17. (SBU) Klapovskiy listed Russia's three priorities in space as preventing weapons from being deployed, transparency in all space activities, both military and civilian, and establishing a working Code of Conduct to manage and prevent incidents such as the collision of February 10. He concluded that these three priorities should be the focus of our two countries in the coming months.  
BEYRLE